DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 272 479 SP 027 875

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TITLE Organization: School Organization and the Rewards of Teaching. No. TQ84-8.
INSTITUTION Education Commission of the States, Denver, Colo.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.; Spencer Foundation, Chicago, Ill.
PUB DATE Dec 84
GRANT G00-830-3500
NOTE 26p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Standards; *Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Incentives; Institutional Characteristics; *Policy Formation; School Community Relationship; *School Effectiveness; *School Organization; Teaching Conditions

ABSTRACT

This paper, one of the nine-booklet Teacher Quality Series, offers guidelines for educational leaders who have the responsibility of making policy to improve the school as an organization in which teaching and learning take place. Various organizational schemes that encourage staff to share understandings and techniques, help each other to improve, and use research findings to test new methods are described. Specific topics discussed include: (1) community-school relationships; (2) the character of the school; (3) linking teacher improvement and school organization; (4) school organization and status; (5) teacher rewards and incentives; (6) promoting teacher leadership; and (7) defining and supporting school improvement. Information about the other booklets in this series concludes the document. (JD)

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ORGANIZATION

School Organization and the Rewards of Teaching
No. TQ84-8

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December 1984

Work on this paper was supported by funds from the Spencer Foundation, the Education Commission of the States and the U.S. Department of Education, Grant No. G00-830-3600.

The author would especially like to thank Ellen Flannelly, Joslyn Green and Gretchen Perez for their important contributions to the completion of this paper.

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INTRODUCTION

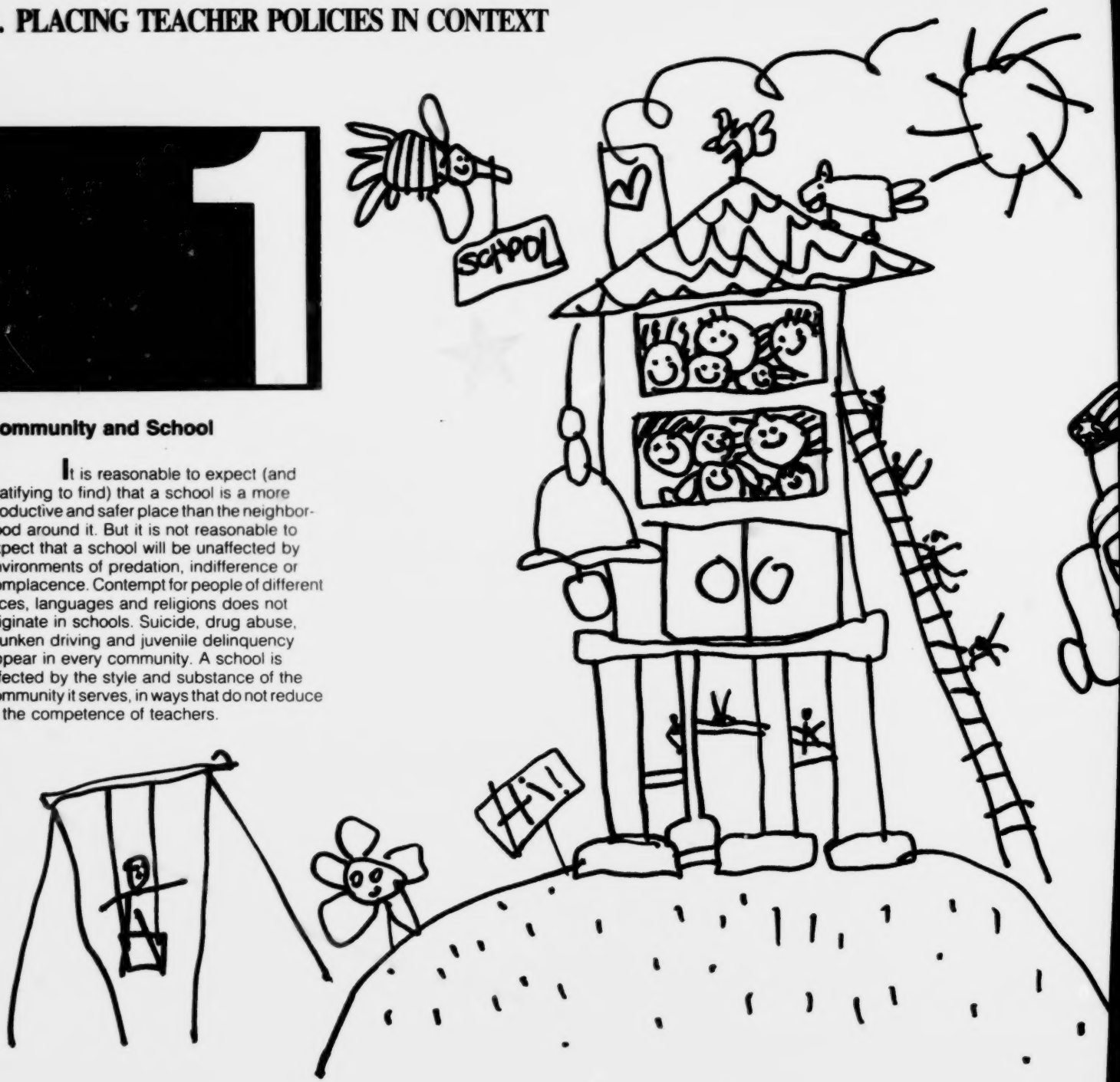
When an organization disappoints us, we tend to blame the people in it. That makes matters simpler. But while each of us would like to be dealt with as a unique individual, we would like to deal with other people in terms of rules and generalities. So we suppose that the work of others is readily performed and readily judged, that others have the support they need to do their work, and that no barriers keep them from doing it right. Ourselves moved by complex motives, we nevertheless presume that others are moved by simple ones, like money.

It is convenient to suppose that the effectiveness of schools depends solely on the competence of teachers, and that some straightforward link between teachers and money will improve schools. Aside from their convenience, however, these suppositions have little to recommend them. Teaching is neither easily performed nor readily judged. It is instead complex and difficult work that only in the last 20 years has begun to receive the careful study it deserves. Teachers are not moved only by simple motives like earning money but by more complex and conditional motives of service. We should be glad of that, since it means that our children will not be taught by mercenaries.

Teachers are not powerless to resist our attempts to simplify them. They form a large and well organized force in contemporary politics. More important, they do a kind of work that requires considerable skill, care and love. They can be encouraged, helped, supported and led to do this kind of work. But they cannot be forced to do it well.

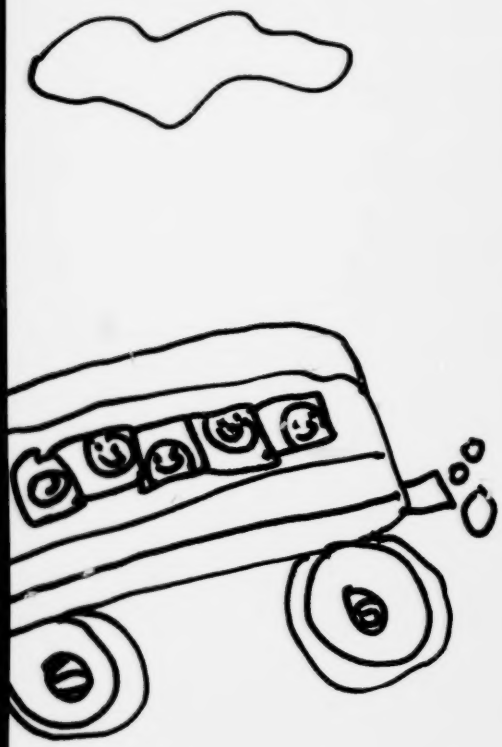
If we are going to improve schools, teachers and teaching, we will have to unsimplify them. Other papers in this series introduce useful complications into the issues of teacher evaluation, the legal aspects of assessing and rewarding performance, the costs of paying for performance, and the roles of state and local organizations. This paper takes up the complication that teaching is not practiced, improved or judged in isolation from the school in which it occurs.

1. PLACING TEACHER POLICIES IN CONTEXT



Community and School

It is reasonable to expect (and gratifying to find) that a school is a more productive and safer place than the neighborhood around it. But it is not reasonable to expect that a school will be unaffected by environments of predation, indifference or complacence. Contempt for people of different races, languages and religions does not originate in schools. Suicide, drug abuse, drunken driving and juvenile delinquency appear in every community. A school is affected by the style and substance of the community it serves, in ways that do not reduce to the competence of teachers.



A school is also affected by its "balance of intake": the distribution of academic skills, social skills, work habits, perceptions and behavior of its students. In some measure, a school gears itself to the characteristics of its students. This may or may not be fruitful. The perception that many students are disadvantaged may lead a faculty either to undertake special measures to help these students or to expect too little from them. The perception that many students are rowdy may lead to harsh disciplinary measures, to laxness or to the "firm, fair, consistent" systems of discipline seen in safer schools. Through their school boards, communities can influence the balance of intake. Schoolwide reaction to student characteristics can be assessed and altered. It makes sense, then, to evaluate individual teachers only within that larger context of influences and values.

School Character

A school, however, is not a pawn of its neighborhood and balance of intake. Schools have been found to vary considerably in their success with similar students in similar settings. That capacity has been attributed to school ethos or culture — "a structure, process and climate of values and norms that channel staff in the direction of successful teaching and learning." Such values and norms can be attributed to a faculty as a whole, and thus might be in reach of a faculty as a whole. But they are not readily attributed to or made the separate responsibility of any single teacher. A firm, fair and consistent system of discipline can be only the product of mutual efforts by teachers, administrators and staff. A climate of favorable expectations for students cannot be created by one teacher alone. Where conditions are favorable, one might judge whether individual teachers play their parts. Where conditions are not favorable, blaming teachers individually for matters requiring leadership and organization will not be fruitful.

Schooling

A student's experience of school is largely his experience of classrooms and teachers — of what is taught, how it is taught and how students are organized for learning. While these matters clearly fall into the domain of the faculty, they exceed the responsibility of individual teachers.

A community, its school board, parents and school district officials rightly have a voice in what is taught and done in schools. By the same token, they bear some responsibility for results. Requiring "American History" in the 10th grade does not mean that a teacher can teach (or students can master) 400 years of history in 180 days (minus time out for school assemblies, standardized testing, sporting events, school pictures and other activities thought in many communities to be desirable).

A teacher seldom has the sole responsibility for teaching an entire body of knowledge. Usually, a teacher's success depends on the teachers who have taught his students in previous years, and his success will affect the success of teachers who will teach them in subsequent years. Cumulative learning through the years of schooling is a joint accomplishment of teachers.

Students are influenced by the culture of their peers. Teachers have options for shaping that culture in favor of learning — for example, by using student team learning methods to organize peer pressure for achievement. But no single teacher's efforts are likely to exert much influence. Only a concerted faculty effort is likely to shape a culture for learning.

2. LINKING TEACHING IMPROVEMENT AND SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Rewards of Teaching

Among the rewards of teaching are the success of one's students, the feeling of efficacy in one's work, the sense of growth in one's own skills and powers, the satisfaction of service, the support and respect of one's colleagues and supervisors, humane and comfortable working conditions, and suitable pay and fringe benefits. Susan Rosenholtz reports that these intrinsic and immediate rewards of teaching are foremost in bringing people into teaching and in keeping proficient teachers in the profession.

Many of these rewards, and particularly intrinsic and immediate rewards, depend on the character of a school; they are difficult or impossible to attain solely by individual effort. A 5th-grade teacher's pride in his students depends on the work of 4th-grade teachers. One of a secondary school student's five or six teachers seldom can claim great influence; that one teacher's sense of efficacy is bound up with the success of other teachers. A teacher who maintains discipline in her own classroom may suffer in a turbulent school. In a complacent school, there may be little respect for a teacher who strives to improve. In a school that provides little support, improving one's skills can be a lonely pursuit.

In many ways, a teacher can succeed only as a school succeeds. It is probably no coincidence that teachers tend to reach peak proficiency, and are most likely to leave teaching, within a few years of becoming teachers. When they reach the limit of their ability to improve on their own, the rewards of teaching start to decline. Dissatisfactions accordingly loom larger. The retention of skillful, experienced teachers may depend more on organizing schools for steady improvement, to assure the continuation of growth and of the intrinsic rewards of teaching, than on any extrinsic consideration such as pay for performance.

Improvement Requires Partnership

Wanting to perform better each year is one thing; having opportunity or support for improvement is quite another. It is becoming steadily clearer that substantially improving one's teaching on one's own is an extraordinary accomplishment.

Even the best training does not prepare a teacher to apply refined methods proficiently; proficiency is mostly acquired through guided practice in the classroom. The classroom is a complex and fast-moving place where new and experienced teachers alike often are hard-pressed to maintain minimum movement, much less use refined techniques proficiently. Teachers sometimes find it difficult even to perceive correctly what they do, much less gauge effects reliably.

Thus, the advancement of teaching necessarily is a partnership between the teacher and someone who is equipped to help the teacher plan lessons, observe and analyze those lessons, discern patterns in teaching and learning, and organize and test options for improvement. Such a partnership will benefit from systematic study, not only of teaching practices but also of the methods of fruitful collaboration: training, observation of classrooms, analysis and evaluation of teaching. A concerted effort to produce practical information about such matters has been made only in the last 15 years. The findings are mixed and pertain primarily to a few outcomes of elementary school teaching. There are some useful summaries of what has been done, but these summaries do not constitute standard manuals of teaching.

Practical research on school leadership and improvement is in a similar state. Only recently have researchers concentrated on questions of what school principals actually do, how the members of a faculty deal with each other in efforts to improve and how proposed innovations are typically received. In his review of these initial efforts, Michael Fullan said:

> We found out during the 1970s that there were many different ways to fail, and being able to explain failure was not of direct help in being able to understand, let alone influence, success. In 1982, I believe we can honestly say that we can understand success, and even help bring it about under certain conditions (the latter of course being a significant qualifier).

Fullan's assessment can be taken as good news; the options for improving schools are increasing. But, clearly, he is describing a fledgling enterprise. The research on improving teaching and schools does not tell us how to "insert Tab A in Slot A." Used in a fashion consonant with its qualified and provisional character, the research can be a powerful tool for improvement. Abused by premature conversion to uniform standards and criteria, the research is as likely to hinder as to foster improvement.

Schools Are Not Organized for Improvement

One mark of a professional is the continuing application of new knowledge. Teachers bear a substantial obligation to acquire and use new options, knowledge or techniques. But even the present limited research exceeds the capacities of most schools to put it to systematic use. For the most part, teachers work in isolation. Typically, principals devote very little time directly to matters of instruction. It is safe to say that most schools are not organized to support the systematic improvement of teaching. The school day, year and budget do not include improvement as a substantial activity. The sorts of exchanges that would make systematic improvement of teaching plausible are seldom seen.

No one is to blame for this situation. Schools have not been expected to organize for systematic improvement of teaching. Until recently, the public, researchers and school personnel alike have been occupied with the age and appearance of buildings, the numbers of books in libraries, the years of experience and advanced degrees of teachers, average class size, per capita expenditures and other matters that — in the ranges in which they are typically encountered in American schools — have been found to have little or no bearing on students' learning and success as adults. Only in the last 10 years has research been directed at matters that apparently do make a difference: the "internal lives of schools," the ways in which students are perceived, taught, organized and otherwise treated day by day.

Research Does Not Constitute Standards

It is one thing to use research on teaching for assessment and improvement and quite another to turn that same research into uniform standards for evaluating or paying teachers. Procedures that are adequate to bring about improvement may be inadequate for personnel decisions and particularly inadequate for the refined judgments about teaching that merit pay programs require.

Many improvement plans attempt to convert research findings into uniform criteria for teachers, standard forms for observing them; and standard procedures for certifying them, promoting them or terminating them. While the need for some uniformity in certification and personnel decisions must be granted, the probable costs of adopting uniform standards for teaching must be recognized. The research base will grow so fast that systems of standards will be hard pressed to keep up; the standards are as likely to retard as to speed the use of emerging knowledge. The research base is thin and uneven; there is a risk of failing to reward, or even of punishing, practices that contribute to learning. An alternative — which may hold teachers to a higher, more immediate and more stringent standard of accountability — is to organize schools to use research in the contingent and refined fashion that it requires and can sustain. In this view, the pressing need is not to convert research into standards but to convey new findings and teaching options to teachers; to engage teachers in cooperative work on the curricula, materials and practices needed to apply the research; to provide teachers the direct support they need to convert research to practice; and to provide teachers the means to assess the results of their efforts.

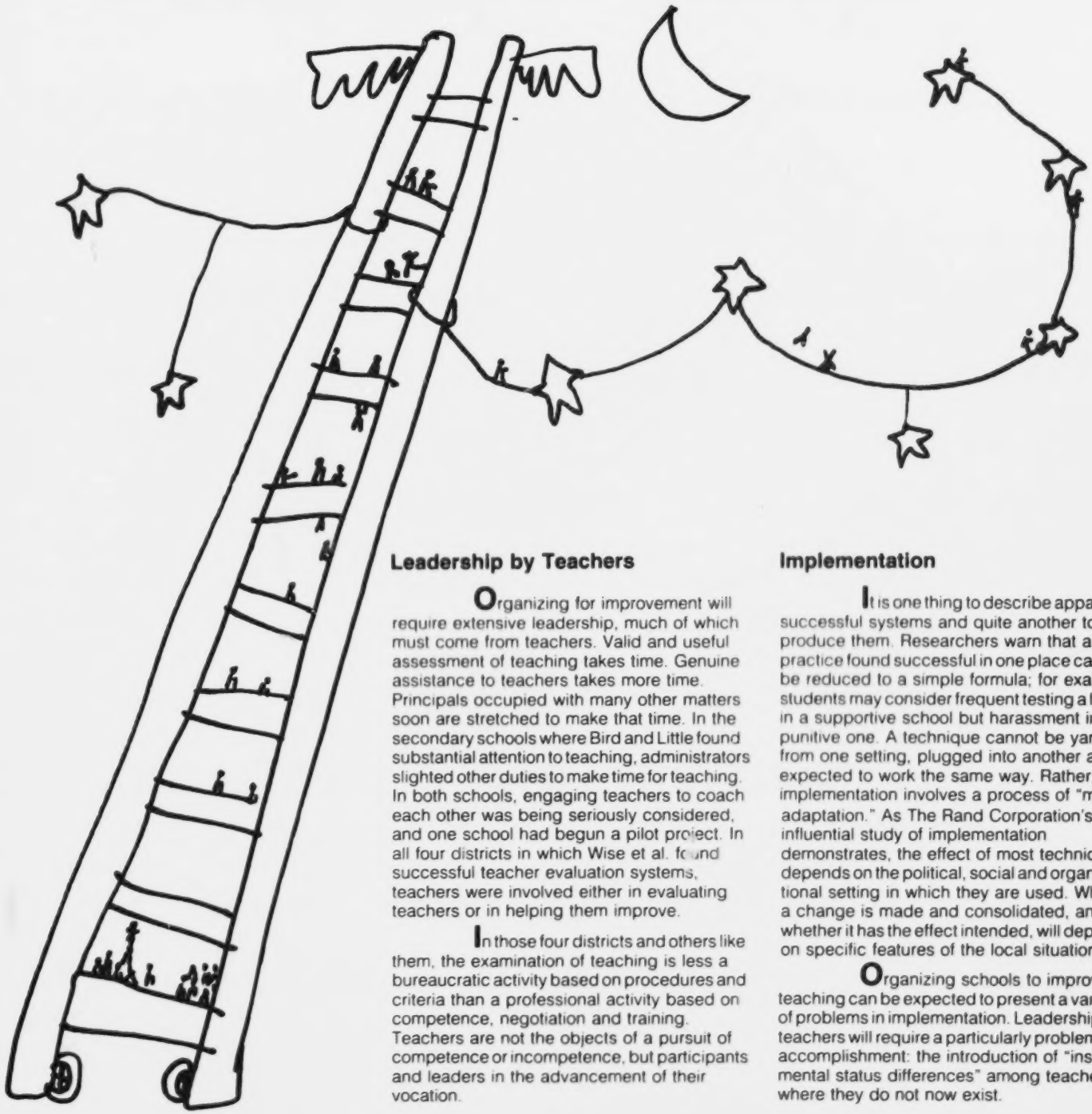
Organizing for Improvement

Organizing schools to use new research systematically will require, in most cases, substantial and often stressful adjustments in professional activities and relations.

Few of us leap at the chance to have our work closely scrutinized. When our work is examined, we want the examiner to be truly fit to judge, comment and help us improve. And we want to know the ground rules. What will be looked at? How vulnerable are we? Will an examiner make a snap judgment during the 20 minutes when things haven't been going as well as usual? Will we have a chance to explain what went on before and after the visit? Teachers have those same concerns. For teachers who have worked mostly in isolation, close examination will be doubly stressful; new routines and skills will be needed.

Principals and other administrators are probable evaluators and partners in the examination of teaching. Their situation mirrors that of teachers. To date, most have devoted relatively little time to instruction and teaching; they have been dealing with small matters like baby booms and desegregation. The rapid concentration of political and scientific attention on teaching practices may require them to make substantial adjustments. Since some of their constituents believe that a principal's job is to provide winning teams and bands, personally assure the safety of every student or spend a half hour with every parent with a complaint, they will have to make time for work on instruction. For this they will need new knowledge and skills.

Such adjustments are possible. In a study of instructional leadership, Bird and Little describe two secondary schools in which principals had shifted substantial time and energy to the evaluation and improvement of teaching, with strong support and favorable reviews from faculty. But adjustments will not occur simply because they are desirable. In four school districts with successful teacher evaluation systems, Wise et al. found four common denominators: clear organizational commitment to the systems, competent evaluators, participation by teachers in the design of the systems and thoughtful connection of evaluation systems to "a larger strategy for school improvement."



Leadership by Teachers

Organizing for improvement will require extensive leadership, much of which must come from teachers. Valid and useful assessment of teaching takes time. Genuine assistance to teachers takes more time. Principals occupied with many other matters soon are stretched to make that time. In the secondary schools where Bird and Little found substantial attention to teaching, administrators slighted other duties to make time for teaching. In both schools, engaging teachers to coach each other was being seriously considered, and one school had begun a pilot project. In all four districts in which Wise et al. found successful teacher evaluation systems, teachers were involved either in evaluating teachers or in helping them improve.

In those four districts and others like them, the examination of teaching is less a bureaucratic activity based on procedures and criteria than a professional activity based on competence, negotiation and training. Teachers are not the objects of a pursuit of competence or incompetence, but participants and leaders in the advancement of their vocation.

Implementation

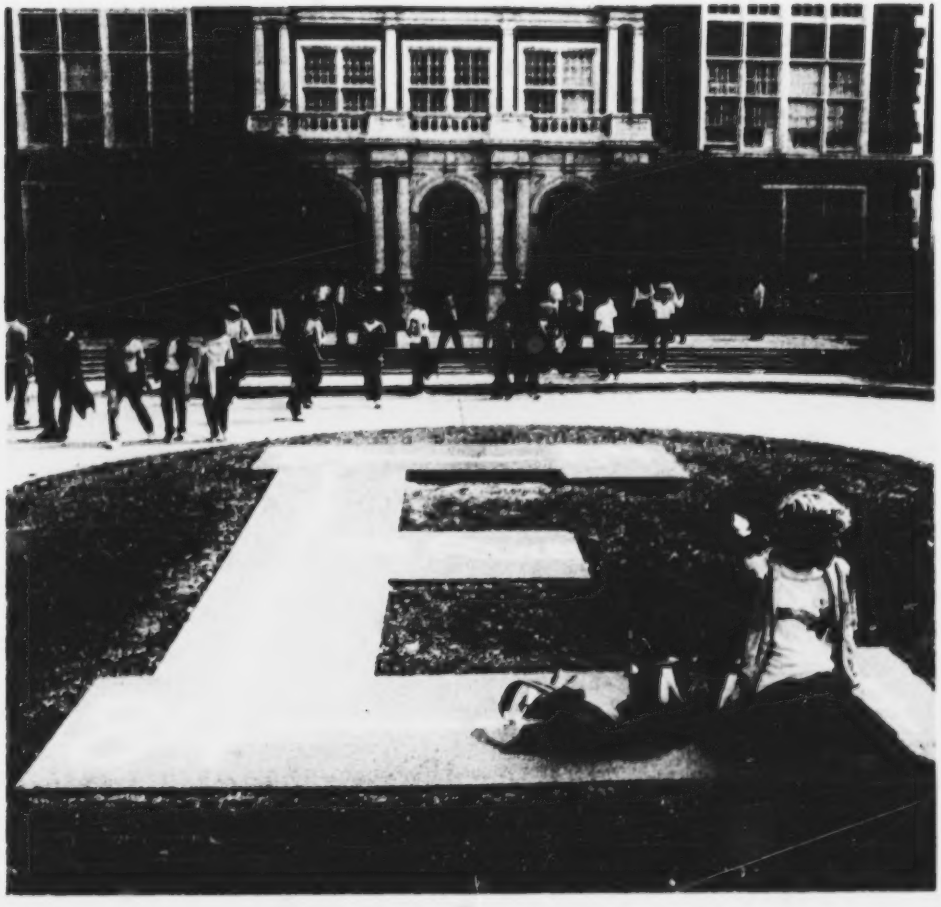
It is one thing to describe apparently successful systems and quite another to produce them. Researchers warn that a practice found successful in one place cannot be reduced to a simple formula; for example, students may consider frequent testing a help in a supportive school but harassment in a punitive one. A technique cannot be yanked from one setting, plugged into another and expected to work the same way. Rather, implementation involves a process of "mutual adaptation." As The Rand Corporation's influential study of implementation demonstrates, the effect of most techniques depends on the political, social and organizational setting in which they are used. Whether a change is made and consolidated, and whether it has the effect intended, will depend on specific features of the local situation.

Organizing schools to improve teaching can be expected to present a variety of problems in implementation. Leadership by teachers will require a particularly problematic accomplishment: the introduction of "instrumental status differences" among teachers where they do not now exist.

3. ORGANIZING FOR IMPROVEMENT

Organization and Status

It is possible that shared aims, common priorities, favorable expectations of students, consistent approaches to discipline and an intellectually lively examination of teaching will be established by consensual processes among nominal and actual equals on school staffs. However, that is a great deal to ask of people who now work largely in isolation and who have little experience in the shared examination of teaching.



More likely, and more in keeping with effective schools research, is that administrators and leaders among teachers will construct a distinct and beneficial school ethos. They will set the pace and determine the tone of the school. Some people will assert greater status with regard to teaching and schooling; others will defer to that status. Instrumental status differences, then, are status differences that influence practice.

Organizing a school for improvement will produce these instrumental status differences as well as require their use. The more that teachers work closely together and see each other's work, the more likely they are to find that some teachers are more energetic, more knowledgeable, more dedicated or more skillful than others. Nominal status equality, which is possible when teachers work in isolation with separate relations to adminis-

trators, will become impossible as teachers see each other at work. Private understanding of proficiency earlier based on little direct information will become public understanding based on much information. Some teachers will emerge as leaders, and others will accept them as such, or not. The generation of status differences is not a trivial pursuit.

Status and Pay for Performance

Explicitly or implicitly, pay-for-performance initiatives recognize the need for leadership by teachers. These initiatives all attempt to confer instrumental status on some teachers, requiring those teachers to assert that status and other teachers to accept it. To assign a merit bonus is to assert that one teacher's teaching is superior to that of other teachers. To accept increased pay and the responsibility of writing curricula is to assert that one's ability to organize that content for teaching and one's creativity in determining how to teach that content are greater than other teachers'. To accept increased pay and the duty of advising other teachers is to assert not only that one is a more skillful teacher, but also that one has the skills needed to help other teachers improve. Both the persons who assign status and the teachers who accept status are making substantial assertions of prowess.

These assertions will have little or no bearing on school improvement if other teachers do not respond to them. Those who confer merit pay on some small minority of teachers cannot expect that the acts of that minority will make much improvement in schools. The explicit or implicit aim of merit pay is to influence the behavior of many teachers. But if the many other teachers have no basis for acknowledging the superior skills of the few merit pay recipients, the many are unlikely to emulate the few. The trappings of status will not be matched by any instrumental effect on teaching.

The Requirement of Reciprocity

The status relations implied or prescribed by pay-for-performance initiatives require reciprocity. One who asserts some knowledge, skill or authority must then display it, or the relation will be empty. This is a social commonplace. If we defer to another's skill, but he is not then skillful, we will fail in our common purpose. No legislator with a decent respect for the interests of his constituency will defer to another legislator who does not demonstrate sound judgment. No teacher with a decent concern for her students will defer to anyone who does not demonstrate proficiency in regard to teaching.

In teaching, the requirement of reciprocity is stringent. Teaching and learning, assessing teaching and helping teachers improve are all complex, subtle and demanding enterprises. It will be difficult for one teacher to assert, and for another teacher to grant, the knowledge and skill that reciprocity requires. Both the master teacher and other teachers will correctly perceive risk in their potential relations. If interaction is taken seriously, then the teachers may be found to be ignorant, inept or inadequate in some respect. They may be asked to make changes that they find objectionable, difficult or impossible. On the other side of the relation, the master teacher may be found to be less than masterful, either in her own teaching or in her ability to help other teachers advance.

An instrumental relation — a relation in which a teacher's teaching changes — will be particularly difficult to achieve where extensive interaction about teaching is not a normal part of the school day. That is the usual case. Where teachers work in isolation, a teacher who has received merit pay has little opportunity to show other teachers that it is deserved. His position depends entirely on the credibility of the procedures used to nominate him. Given the limitations of teacher evaluation procedures at present, the merit teacher is on thin ice. As Wise et al. describe the matter:

> The award of merit pay, while not as serious as a dismissal decision, nevertheless has visible consequences: It will label some teachers meritorious and others, by default, unmeritorious. The latter group will then want to scrutinize the process, especially when every teacher is evaluated every year. . . . Some might argue that award of merit pay could or should be kept confidential. Such a policy does not seem likely in the freedom-of-information era.

More to the point, making merit pay confidential would announce that the evaluation procedure could not withstand teachers' scrutiny and thus would defeat a main (if implicit) function of merit pay: to encourage other teachers to emulate the meritorious teacher's performance. Both the credibility of the merit award and the extended influence of the merit award will depend on close working relations among teachers; one cannot emulate a performance that one has never seen.

Similarly, teachers who are obliged to perform as masters, mentors or career teachers where norms discourage mutual examination of teaching will find it difficult or impossible to meet their obligations. They will have the assignment of helping other teachers where helping other teachers is not a normal activity.

Likely results are that teachers will retreat from the status difference. The recipient of merit pay will not expose that honor; other teachers will ignore it. The master teacher/curriculum developer will offer her product in an indirect and hesitant way; few other teachers will examine it closely or take pains to put it to use. The master teacher who has been assigned to coach other teachers is likely to find teachers "happy to have you in my classroom anytime" but slow to make an appointment. If some coaching does occur, the master teacher will assert little and the teacher observed will defer little.

These relations are unlikely to be useful or satisfying. The master teacher is likely to fail to meet the obligations that go with the signs of his status. Other teachers are likely to treat the master teacher with a combination of sympathy and resentment, and to disdain the persons who (and the procedures which) placed the master teacher in his position. This is likely to occur whenever a teacher is asked to assert a status he has not visibly achieved by work with his colleagues. A more powerful device for punishing skillful teachers would be hard to construct.

Formality Provides No Solution

Because status differences among teachers are consequential and controversial, and because the grounds for assigning those differences are debatable, a search for impersonal, mechanical shortcuts is likely. The search will probably meet with frustration.

Office and authority are no substitute for recognized judgment and skill. No matter what their job descriptions, principals, district administrators or state officials who have not themselves attained instrumental status cannot confer such status. If teachers do not trust and use supervisors' judgments about their own teaching, they have no reason to accept supervisors' judgments about other teachers. A committee of teachers who does not already recognize and employ instrumental status differences among themselves cannot confer leadership on any teacher; at best they can give a teacher permission and perhaps encouragement to try to lead. A negotiation of job descriptions in a career ladder may set expectations for new relations among teachers, but those relations will be achieved only in productive daily interaction.

Likewise, no announced standards for teaching can substitute for mutual understanding among teachers of the essential nature of their work. A rating form can express shared language of teaching that is rooted in the shared experience of teaching. But no form can take the place of shared experience. The foundations of leadership in teaching are established not by fiat, but by learning and exchange.

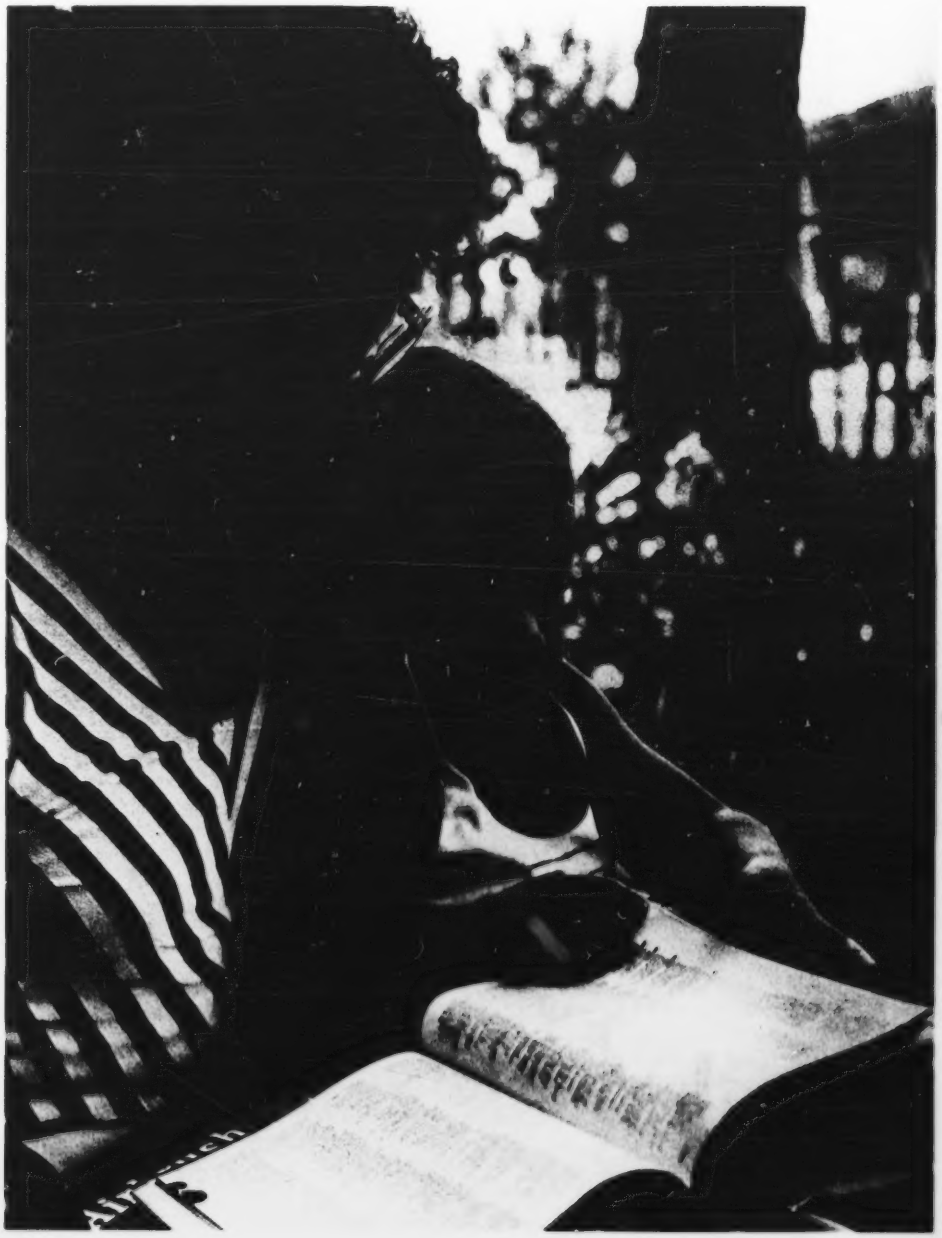
The essence of leadership is the successful assertion of status — knowledge, skill, energy and correctness — in intimate situations. Face to face, one person proposes a goal; others subscribe to it. Another person suggests a strategy; others agree it could work. These are not mechanical events. A person can be helped to gain the skill and knowledge needed to meet a leader's obligations. A group of persons can be assembled and helped to forge common understandings. A prospective leader could achieve the stature needed to lead her colleagues. Ways can be seen to foster that achievement; no formality can replace it.

The assertion, acceptance and utility of instrumental status differences require accepted routines of improvement that allow teachers who are nominated to higher status to achieve that status visibly and to meet its obligations.

4. PROMOTING TEACHER LEADERSHIP

Formulate School Reorganization

Public pressure and growing research on schools and teaching constitute both a demand that can be met and an opportunity that can be seized by schools organized for systematic improvement. That task of organization is a new undertaking in which little can be taken for granted. As a beginning, school boards, district officials, school administrators and teachers can formulate a clear conception of the organization desired and their new roles. Central to that formulation is a description of leadership by teachers, and of the instrumental status differences on which leadership is properly founded.



Strengthen Leadership by Principals

It is unlikely that useful status differences among teachers will be formed and sustained without the active support of principals. However, attention to matters of instruction, the systematic use of research findings in school improvement and the cultivation of leaders among teachers all will require extensive training in the research on teaching, clinical supervision and the cultivation of new relations among teachers.

Training alone will be insufficient. Also necessary is direct support of principals in their schools. Small and well-organized groups of principals may be able to provide continuing support for their members. Like teachers, principals may benefit when others, perhaps astute members of a school district's staff, closely observe and describe their work. If a principal asks for teachers' views, he will gain information about his performance and also demonstrate a professional stance toward examination of all practices in the school.

Increase Visibility of Teacher Leaders

With adequate support from a school district, principals can promote mutual improvement in a school and the emergence of leaders among teachers.

Greater knowledge and skill can only be judged, much less asserted and accepted, in a group whose shared aims, shared understanding of the work and shared terms for describing that work provide adequate grounds for judgment. Teachers who usually work in isolation are unlikely to compose such groups. Well-founded and proficient training, mutual work on curricula and materials, and other such exchanges will help those groups form.

Prospective leaders must have the opportunity to display their knowledge, skill and correctness to those they would lead. Nominal leaders among teachers should visibly organize and participate in activities designed to build common ground in a faculty. Actual leaders may also emerge from those same activities. Also, teachers observing each other in the classroom may be the most productive and also the most demanding form of interaction.

To meet their obligations, nominal leaders are likely to need skills other than those that brought them to their position, e.g., skills of observing classes, of training adults, of writing curricula. To help them achieve the status that they are to assert, nominal leaders should attain these skills in a fashion that is visible to other teachers. Publicizing leaders' training, for example, helps convince other teachers of the leaders' worth.

Achieved stature and skills can be put to work in approved and valued routines for examining and improving the school. Such routines will not emerge just because teachers have been prepared to lead them. Schools must purposefully establish routines — preferably ones that focus on particular improvements in practice. If a group of teachers concentrates, for example, on methods for classroom management, for presenting material, for involving students in discussion or for organizing students for learning, the teachers will find it easier to build the common language, make specific agreements and master the skills required for improvement. In this way, teachers who are becoming leaders are exposed to criticism only in a limited range of the teaching repertoire that reduces their risk in working with others.

Teachers are not equally prepared to sustain the professional relations described in this section. School districts and administrators should support those teachers who are prepared to find ways to help form the desired relations. This differential treatment of teachers may cause tensions, but such tensions may be an unavoidable cost of reorganizing schools.

Time and Money

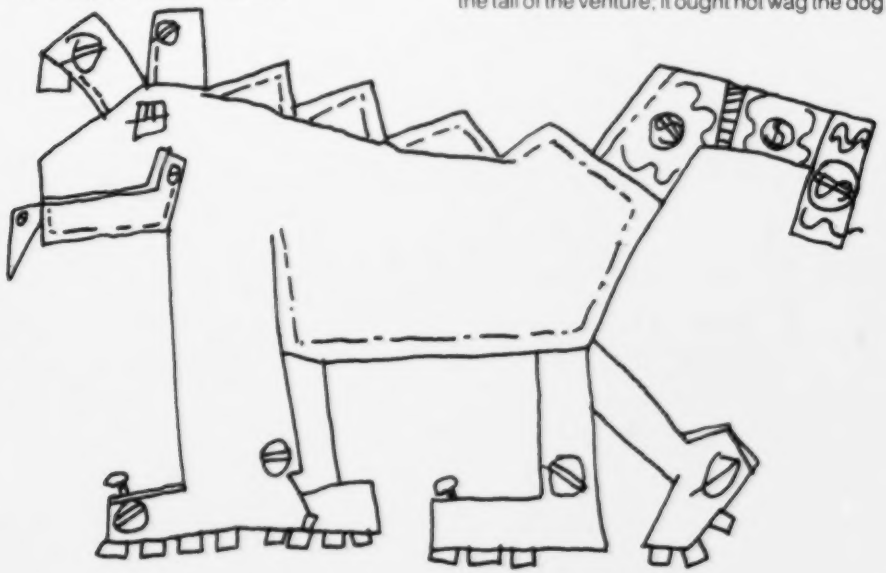
To the degree that the preceding efforts are undertaken seriously, they will show that few schools are organized for improvement. A school's staffing, schedule, normal working day and budget typically do not include appreciable time or support for the activities that improvement requires. As these limits are encountered, communities, school boards and district officials can assess the strength of their desire for better schools. They might then reorganize and augment the school day and schedule, the school budget and the school staffing plan to incorporate systematic improvement as a substantial element.

The Place of Pay for Performance

It will be acceptable, desirable or necessary at various points to recognize and reward the status differences that emerge among teachers. Pay for performance may develop on a sound and accepted basis. In view of the preceding arguments, some options are preferable to others.

Merit pay plans without matching components to support teacher improvements are idle and potentially destructive ventures. With evaluation standards and procedures known to be inadequate for refined differentiation of teaching skill, they attempt to hold teachers personally accountable for performances that they can produce only with help. This approach is not likely to produce appreciable improvements in teaching. It is likely to produce dissension in faculties who need to be cohesive. Merit pay plans accompanied by support for improvement come nearer to the point. However, they rely on the same deficient technology, they ignore the organizational aspect of schooling and they may sorely stretch the resources of those who evaluate and work with teachers. Mentor teacher, master teacher and career ladder initiatives may have the advantage of expanding the sources of leadership and support by and for teachers. While they cannot replace efforts to organize schools for systematic improvement, they can be made to complement those efforts.

In any case, pay for performance is the tail of the venture; it ought not wag the dog.



5. DEFINING AND SUPPORTING IMPROVEMENT

Focus on Schools

Governors, legislatures and state departments of education should focus their own and the public's attention where it belongs and will bear most fruit: on schools as organizations. If they can shift the hot lights from teachers to schools, they could start to forge the alliance of policy makers, school administrators, citizens and teachers that is needed to make substantial improvements in schools.

Tenacity

Schools will not be organized for systematic improvement either this year or next. There is no quick fix that could satisfy a skeptical public. Credible efforts will base present decisions on goals for the years 1990, 1995 and 2000. Governors, legislatures and state departments of education can set such goals and map a course to reach them.

Experimental Movement

New ventures based on evolving knowledge call not for standards but for experiments. With a legislature's steady support, a state department of education could prepare itself to help selected school districts evaluate promising approaches to school improvement, thus building up a stock of relevant, accessible and tested options. As a

collateral benefit, such efforts would enlarge the supply of persons who are prepared to provide genuine assistance in the use of those options.

Training

The central position of principals justifies extraordinary efforts to prepare them to lead these new initiatives in school improvement. As teachers join the corps of leaders, they might as well be trained with principals in school teams, an effort that may require state leadership and state resources.

Restraint in Standards

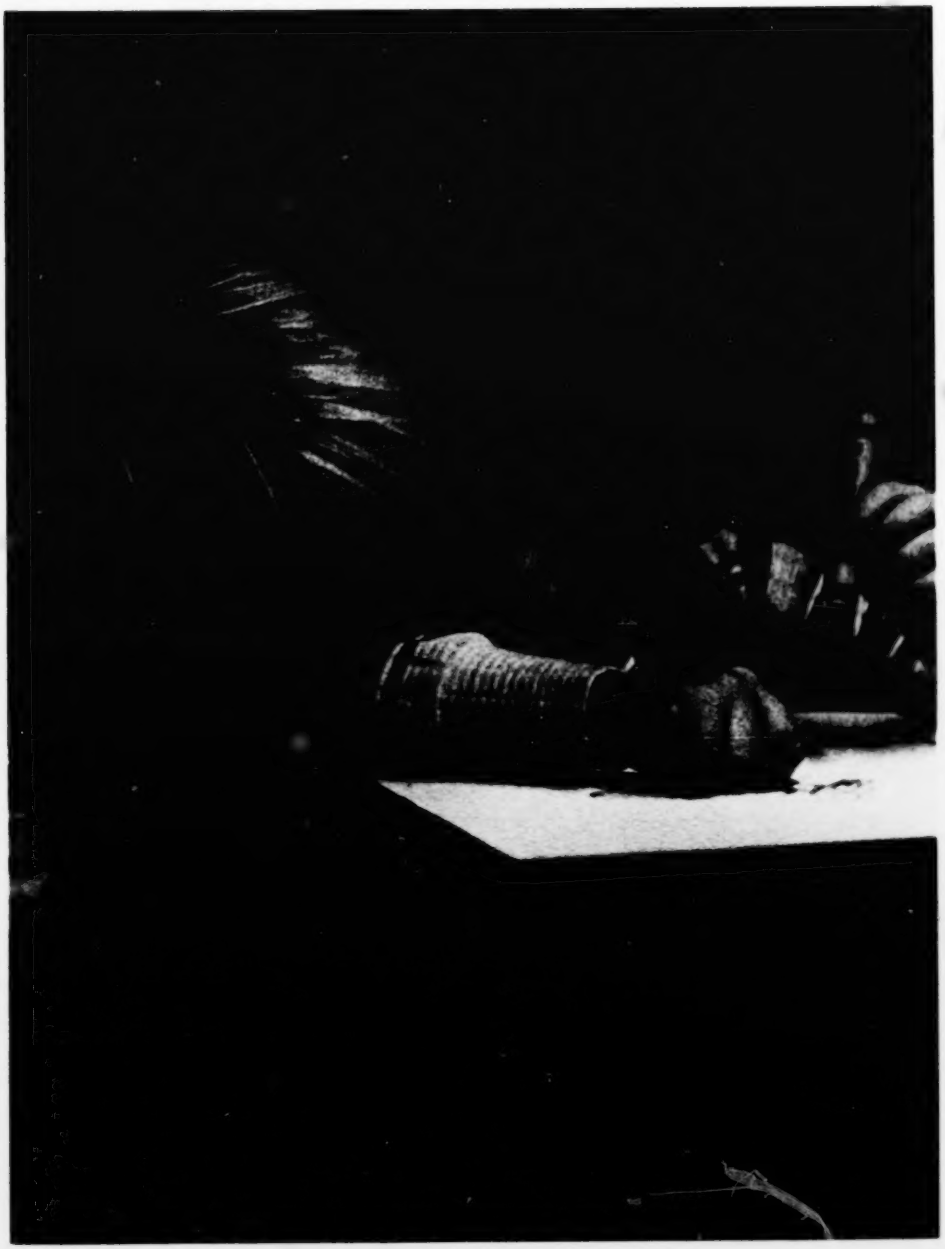
The intense study of teaching is a recent development. For some long time to come, turmoil in education research is likely to produce turmoil in teacher education, evaluation and certification. The conversion of research findings to standards for teaching and teacher education will be both risky in objective terms and debatable in professional and political terms. Few standards are likely to gain the degree of support that would make them powerful tools of policy. Premature adoption of standards and overextension of standards beyond strong evidence may reduce their influence even further. Standards for teaching and teachers should be subordinated to direct efforts to organize schools (and perhaps schools of education) to apply relevant research in a systematic fashion.

SUMMARY

The school's large contribution to the partnership of education depends on its character as an organization. Quality of schooling may not be reduced to the quality of teaching; the attempt to do so diverts attention from important avenues for improvement. Converting the present research on teaching into fixed standards for teaching places on that research a burden that it will not bear and also diverts attention from more promising approaches to its use in school improvement.

Improvements in schools and teaching are necessarily mutual efforts by the faculty. Organizing these efforts will introduce instrumental status differences among teachers. Pay for performance can formalize and reward these differences, but it cannot produce them. Norms for mutual examination of teaching are required; they can be sought by direct action and perhaps complemented by some of the pay-for-performance options.

Governors, legislatures and state departments of education may play important parts in defining the task of school improvement, in forging an alliance of officials, school administrators, citizens and teachers, and in supporting the cumulative experiments that provide options for improvement and a corps of knowledgeable people who can help implement those options.



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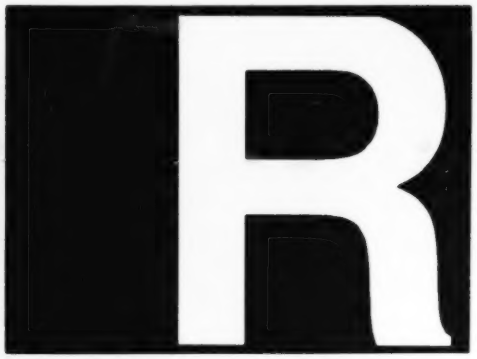

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5. **How States Can Improve Teacher Quality** by Robert Palaich, Education Commission of the States, TQ84-5

   Local efforts to improve teacher quality can be initiated and/or bolstered by state actions, and Palaich offers a logical cumulative strategy for these actions. He covers screening for admission to schools of education, improving curriculum, graduation requirements, certification and tenure. He also shows how states can help develop and fund better evaluation systems, in-service training and performance reward systems, explaining that certain areas of choice should be left to local districts.

6. **The Legal Context for Teacher Improvement** by the Education Commission of the States' Law and Education Center, TQ84-6

   In an effort to pre-inform policy makers and administrators contemplating teacher improvement plans, ECS Law Center staff explain the legal aspects that may affect these plans, and discuss how to tailor plans to comply with constitutional and statutory requirements. Due process, civil rights, free speech, academic freedom, tenure, collective bargaining and governance issues are covered. Case cites and a selected bibliography support the authors' arguments.

7. **A Guideline for Evaluating Teacher Incentive Systems** by Steven M. Jung, American Institutes for Research, TQ84-7

   Jung develops a conceptual framework for evaluating teacher incentive systems. A performance-based system, he says, bases rewards on behavior rather than on added responsibilities. Stated goals must mesh with goals in practice if evaluations are to be valid. Jung also examines assumptions about teaching excellence and the process components of incentive systems.

8. **School Organization and the Rewards of Teaching** by Thomas Bird, Boulder, Colorado, TQ84-8

   Bird focuses on how to organize schools and school settings to encourage better teaching. He describes organizational schemes that encourage staff to share understandings and techniques, help each other to improve and use research findings to test new methods. He suggests that teachers and administrators be trained as role models, and recommends that experimental research applications be supported at the state level.

9. **The Costs of Performance Pay Systems** by Kent McGuire, Education Commission of the States, and John A. Thompson, University of Hawaii, TQ84-9

   Using two different evaluation systems, the authors simulate the costs of merit pay, career ladders and extended contracts to show how costs — none of them prohibitive — vary with plan design. The authors precede the simulations with a thorough discussion of each cost factor involved.

Design and Illustration: Patricia C. Kelly
Typography: Marci Reser
Printer: Golden Bell Press, Denver